

The PLEDGE

Getting there
together



These are your rights!
for young people in care (age 15+)



East and North Hertfordshire
Clinical Commissioning Group



Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group



This is our pledge (or promise) to you. It is for all children and young people looked after by Hertfordshire County Council. It is about the things you can expect from us.

Before you come into care we will ask all family and friends if they can offer you a safe home. But if this is not possible we will make sure you are cared for. We want the same for you as we want for our own children – the best.

You also have a part to play. As you grow older your responsibilities will grow too.

The things in this pledge should happen for you. If they don't, you can use this booklet to challenge your rights. Turn to the back to find out what to do if this is the case.

The thirteen statements that follow are based on what children and young people in care in Hertfordshire said was important to them.

Explaining



When you first come into care we will help you understand why you are coming into care, and make sure you have everything you need:

- We will explain why you are coming into care and be honest and clear with you about the plans for you, including about whether or not you are likely to be returning home
- We will give you an information profile about your carer, which gives you an idea of the family/placement you are going to, the set-up of the household, hobbies and interests
- We will make sure you have all your belongings within seven days in proper holdalls and/or suitcases
- We will make sure you have all the contact details of your brothers and sisters and key family members within seven days (as long as this is safe)



We will tell you about things you are entitled to, like pocket money and savings

When you come into care we will provide you with a pack of useful information which will include all the things you are entitled to such as pocket money, savings, clothing allowance, setting up home allowance etc. This information will be available to you throughout your time in care.

Explaining



We will only share information about you if we are sure it is in your best interest to do so

Listening



We will listen to what you think when adults are making decisions about you:

We will talk to you when making decisions about you and listen to what you think, what you want and how you feel. How much this can change things will depend on things like how old you are, your individual experience and situation and your safety.

We will listen to you about:

- your care plan
- the best place for you to live
- school or college
- keeping in contact with your family

We will try to make your review easy for you to take part in.

We will make sure you understand all decisions made about you.

Listening



We will listen to what you think about how to make being in care better for lots of children and tell you how you can get involved with the Children in Care Council (CHICC)

The CHICC is run by and for children and young people in care. It is to make sure you can have your say about being in care, and help make services better for others. The CHICC runs lots of events and activities throughout the year. There are also opportunities to get involved as a volunteer and help run the CHICC.

There are lots of activities just for care leavers too, including a group that meets monthly, an annual conference and lots of opportunities to get involved in helping to improve services. Contact the Participation Team on **07776171298** to find out more.

Keeping you safe and settled



We will protect you and keep you safe and settled

Your safety, health, happiness and education come first. Whatever decisions are being made about you or your life, we will work with you to keep you safe and settled. If you have to move placement we will involve you in the decision as much as possible and give you an information profile of the placement you will be moving to.

You should not have to put up with bullying at school or college, at your home or anywhere else. Please tell a trusted adult if you are being bullied so that we can do something about it together.



We will make sure you have a social worker. Your social worker will do their best to spend time with you and get to know you



We will help you to keep in touch with family and friends, as long as this is safe

- If possible, we will keep you with your brothers and sisters when you come into care
- It should be fine to go and stay at a friends and to have friends over too. Your carer and social worker should be able to agree to this (as long as it is safe)

Explaining

Art completed by young people in care in Hertfordshire, to show the importance of the pledge.



Listening

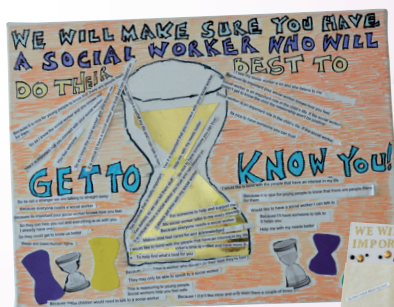


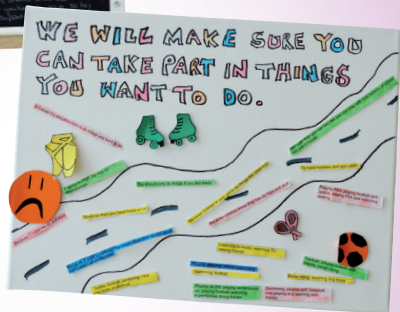
Being Healthy

Art completed by young people in care in Hertfordshire, to show the importance of the pledge.

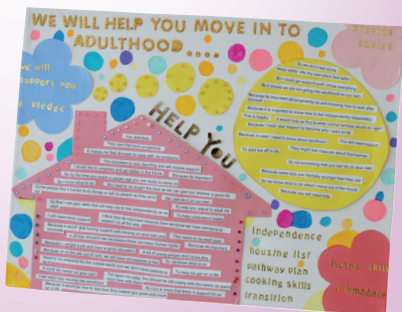


Keeping you safe and settled



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Art completed by young people in care in Hertfordshire, to show the importance of the pledge.



Keeping you safe and settled



We will help you know about who you are and things that are important to your identity

- We will help you to keep a record of important events, achievements and people in your life and to have a memory box
- We will help you to do the things that are important to you in terms of your culture and/or religion
- If you need your birth certificate or passport we can work with you and your parents to get them*

*If you are a young person who came from another country without an adult, you may not be able to have all of these documents. If you are in this situation we will help you to understand why.

Being Healthy



We will help you to be as healthy and well as you can be

- We will help you to have your health assessed and support you with any health needs
- We will help you to get age appropriate and clear information about your health
- We will give you guidance about healthy living and lifestyle choices
- We will help you to get appropriate support for your emotional and mental health when you need it.
- We will make sure you can access your health records and history

Being Ambitious



We will support you with education, training and employment options to help you achieve the best you can

We have the highest aspirations for all children and young people in care.

- When you first come into care and during your time in care, we will set up planning meetings on education and will ensure you are part of the ongoing process
- We will make sure you get all the help and support you need to learn, achieve and succeed



We will make sure you can take part in things you want to do

- We will help you to take part in sports, hobbies and fun activities wherever we can
- We'll work towards ensuring all children in care have an annual holiday



We will help you move into adulthood

To help you move into adulthood we will do our best to:

- Provide clear and early information on the level of support to be offered from age 18
- Help you look at further education, training and apprenticeship opportunities
- Once you complete your education help you find employment and begin your career
- Make sure you have an up to date pathway plan
- Ensure that you have a passport, birth certificate and national insurance number*
- Support you to register on a housing list. We will support you to plan early for the accommodation bidding process
- Involve you in making decisions about transition to adulthood
- Provide opportunities for you to take part in activities that prepare you for independence
- Provide clear information on how you can access your personal records and offer support to do so

*If you are a young person who came from another country without an adult, you may not be able to have some or all of these documents due to immigration issues. If you are in this situation we will help you to understand why.

What can you do if you think this pledge is not working?

We will do our best to make sure the things in the pledge happen for you.

If you feel that one or more parts of this pledge are not happening for you, or you feel that any of your rights have not been met, you can:

- Speak to your carer or social worker. They know you well and are usually the best person to help put things right
- Talk to your independent reviewing officer during the review meeting
- Contact NYAS, the advocacy service (contact details below). They can help to sort out problems with you. They are not part of Hertfordshire County Council
- Contact one of the county councillors who is on the Children's Services Panel. Their contact details can be found at: **www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/**

You can also complain to Children's Services about your care if you want to. We can help you do this if you would like us to. To do this you can call the children's complaints manager on **01992 588542** or email **cs.complaints@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

Sources of Information and Support

NYAS.

Call: **0808 808 1001/0151 649 8700**

Visit: **www.nyas.net** Email: **help@nyas.net**

Hertfordshire County Council Participation Team

They won't be able to help sort out problems but they run the CHICC (Children in Care Council) where you can meet other children in care and together we can make things better for everyone. Call **07776171298**.

Children's Commissioner for England
childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
020 7783 8330

Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)
www.crae.org.uk
Email: **info@crae.org.uk**
Tel **020 7278 8222**

Useful websites:
Thewhocarestrust.org.uk
Info4carekids.org.uk

www.channelmogo.org
Information for all young people in Hertfordshire

If you would like this information in another format, including large print, Braille, audio or in another language, please call the Participation Team on **07776171298**.